

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01 /072 W
----- 065122

R 311208Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6812
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BUDAPEST 2991

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, HU
SUBJ: EXCHANGE OF COMMUNIST PARTY MEMBERSHIP CARDS

1. SUMMARY: PUBLICATION IN AUGUST ISSURE OF PARTELET OF SPEECH BY HSWP SECRETARIAT MEMBER ARPAD PULLAI TO CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF HUNGARIAN SOCIALIST WORKERS' PARTY (HSWP) ON EXCHANGE OF PARTY MEMBERSHIP CARDS PROVIDES OCCASION FOR MAKING JUDGMENT RE NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF EXCHANGE PROCESS. CLEAR THAT NO PURGE TOOK PLACE. ONLY 1.2 PERCENT OF MEMBERS LEFT PARTY IN COURSE OF EXCHANGE. PROCESS SEEMED GENUINE ATTEMPT TO ELIMINATE DEAD WOOD AND TO GET AT GRASS ROOTS OPINION. IT ELICITED CRITICISMS OF RISING PRICES, DISCRIMINATION AGAINST INTELLIGENTSIA, AND OF ASPECTS OF ECONOMIC POLICY BUT APPARENTLY NO DEEP-SEATED DISSATISFACTION. LEFT-RIGHT-WING CARPING ALMOST TOTALLY ABSENT FROM PULLAI SPEECH AND OTHER COMMENTARY AT TIME. PROBABLY REFLECTING SUBSTANTIAL DEGREE OF PARTY UNITY. STATISTICS ON MEMBERSHIP AND THOSE LEAVING PARTY SHOW HSWP HAVING DIFFICULTY IN ITS ATTEMPTS TO INCREASE
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WORKER AND YOUTH MEMBERSHIP. END SUMMARY.

2. ARPAD PULLAI, HSWP SECRETARIAT MEMBER IN CHARGE OF PARTY'S ORGANIZATIONAL AFFAIRS, GAVE HIS REPORT ON EXCHANGE OF PARTY MEMBERSHIP CARDS ON JULY 21. ON JULY 20 PARTY NEWSPAPER NEPSZABADSAG CARRIED INTERVIEW WITH HSWP CONTROL VJXEGAIHS R.M PRMAN JANOS BRUTYO (SEE

FBIS JULY 23) ON PROCESS AND NEPSZABADSAG HAD LENGTHY EDITORIAL ON SAME SUBJECT (SEE FBIS JULY 25).

3. ACCORDING TO HSWP CENTRAL COMMITTEE, PURPOSE OF EXCHANGE ON PARTY CARDS, WHICH HAD BEEN AGREED UPON AT 11TH PARTY CONGRESS OF HSWP IN MARCH 1975, WAS "AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WHICH MUST ENCOURAGE A REVISION OF WORK AND ATTITUDE AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT". NEPSZABADSAG SPECIFICALLY DECLAIMED THAT CONTRARY TO ERRONEOUS RUMORS "IT HAS BEEN PROVEN THAT THE EXCHANGE OF PARTY MEMBERSHIP CARDS DID NOT CONSTITUTE A PURGE". OF COURSE, AS PULLAI AND OTHERS MADE CLEAR, OPPORTUNISTS, THOSE WHO DISAGREED WITH PARTY OBJECTIVES, AND THOSE WHO REFUSED TO FULFILL THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE PARTY WERE WEEDED OUT. PARTY UNITY, THEY SAID, WAS INCREASED.

4. ACCORDING TO NEPSZABADSAG, 760,000 MEMBERS WERE INTERVIEWED BY LOCAL PARTY ORGANS. 150,000 MEMBERS ORGANIZED AND PREPARED THE DISCUSSIONS WITH INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS CONCERNING PARTY POLICY AND RENEWAL OF THEIR PARTY MEMBERSHIP. THIS SUGGESTS NO STAR CHAMBER PROCEEDINGS BY COMMITTEES SENT FROM HSWP'S BUDAPEST HEADQUARTERS. RELATIVE DETACHMENT OF BRUTYO FROM PROCESS, AS DISPLAYED IN HIS INTERVIEW IN THE PRESS, FURTHER INDICATES THAT MOST OF EXCHANGE-OF-CARD PROCESS WAS DIALOGUE UNDERTAKEN AT LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL. AFTER INTERVIEWS OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS, 70 PERCENT OF THE LOCAL PARTY UNITS HELD SUMMARIZING CONFERENCES.

5. STATISTICS GIVEN BY PULLAI SUBSTANTIATE THAT THERE WAS NO PURGE NOR EVEN ANY WIDESPREAD CHANGES. HE SAID THAT AS RESULT OF CONVERSATIONS ONLY 9,298 PERSONS GOT OUT OF THE PARTY, OR 1.2 PERCENT OF ALL PARTY MEMBERS;
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OF THESE 5,736 PERSONS ANNOUNCED THEIR INTENTION TO WITHDRAW FROM THE PARTY DURING CONVERSATIONS; 2,528 HAD THE CANCELLATION OF THEIR MEMBERSHIP INITIATED BY THE "TALKING GROUPS". HE POINTED OUT RESIGNATION WAS GENERALLY MOTIVATED BY NATURAL NOT POLITICAL CAUSES AND THAT FEW MEMBERS DISAGREED WITH "TALKING GROUP" DECISIONS TO POINT WHERE THEY EXERCISED THEIR RIGHT OF APPEAL TO HIGHER HSWP ORGANS.

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 SAJ-01 /072 W

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6. PULLAI NOTED THAT A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF THOSE WHO JOINED PARTY DURING PAST 5-6 YEARS, INCLUDING GREAT NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE, WERE PROPOSED FOR CONCELLATION. HE THOUGHT THIS COULD BE CONSIDERED AS CRITIQUE OF PARTY ADMISSION POLICY WHICH ATTEMPTED TO RECRUIT LARGE NUMBERS OF PHYSICAL WORKERS AND YOUTHS IN ORDER TO INCREASE THEIR PROPORTIONS WITHIN PARTY RANKS. PULLAI ALSO NOTED THAT SIMILAR TO EARLIER YEARS TWO-THIRDS OF THOSE LEAVING PARTY WERE MANUAL WORKERS OR RETIRED LABORERS. ALTHOUGH WORKERS REPRESENT LARGEST GROUP WITHIN HSWP, THERE ARE PEOPLE AMONG THEM WHOSE CLASS AWARENESS IS INSUFFICIENT AND WHOSE ATTITUDE AND PERFORMANCE DO NOT MEET REQUIREMENTS, HE ADDED. SINCE PERCENTAGE OF WORKERS AND YOUTH LEAVING PARTY IS DISPROPORTIONATE TO THEIR NUMBERS WITHIN THE PARTY, EMBASSY CONCLUDES THAT HSWP IS HAVING DIFFICULTY IN CARRYING OUT ITS POLICY FORMULATED A FEW YEARS AGO OF TRYING TO CHANGE THE AGE STRUCTURE AND THE SOCIAL COMPOSITION OF PARTY MORE IN FAVOR OF WORKERS. WHILE HSWP CANNOT AFFORD TO ABANDON THIS POLICY, IT MAY

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TRY TO IMPLEMENT IT MORE PRUDENTLY IN FUTURE. PARTY
RAEADERSHIP CANNOT GIVE UP ON YOUTH BUT COULD MORE
EASILY ACCEPT TACIT PERPETUATION OF CURRENT SOCIAL
STRUCTURE OF HSWP.

7. SEVERAL INTERESTING CRITICISMS ARE DISCUSSED BY
PULLAI AND BY NEPSZABADSAG AS HAVING FREQUENTLY ARISEN
IN COVERRSATIONS WITH PARTY MEMBERS. THE FRANKNESS WITH
WHICH THESE CRITICISMS ARE DISCUSSED SEEMS TO INDICATE
THAT TO SOME EXTENT THERE WAS A REAL EXCHANGE OF OPINION
WITH PARTY MEMBERS AND AN ELEMENT OF GIVE AND
TAKE IN THE EXCHANGE OF MEMBERSHIP CARD DIALOGUE. BRUTYO
SPOKE OF THE INCREASE IN SPIRIT OF PUBLIC CRITICISM SINCE
11TH PARTY CONGRESS; HE REGARDS THIS AS A POSITIVE
DEVELOPMENT AS LONG AS SUCH CRITICISM IS NOT AN EXCUSE
FOR SLANDER.

8. PULLAI DEVOTED MOST OF HIS CRITICAL COMMENTS TO PARTY
MEMBERS' DEMAND FOR MORE CONSISTENT APPLICATION OF PARTY
POLICY. HE SAID WIDE CIRCLE OF PARTY MEMBERS ARE OF
OPINION THAT PARTY AND STATE DISCIPLINE ARE NOT SATISFACTORY.
SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED AS SHORTCOMINGS WERE POOR MATERIAL
AND SPARE PARTS SUPPLY AT WORK ORGANIZATIONS, UNECONOMIC
PRODUCTION, POOR LABOR FORR POLICY, UNSATISFACTORY LEVEL
OF ENTERPRISE DEMOCRACY AND ATMOSPHERE, AND FAILURE OF
SOME PARTY MEMBERS TO FOLLOW PROPER ECONOMIC GUIDELINES.
NEED FOR LESS DISCRIMINATION AGAINST INTELLIGENSIA UNDER-
SCORED. LATTER CLAIM THEY ARE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST IN
OBTAINING HOUSING, PLACING THEIR CHILDREN IN SCHOOL, AND
EVEN IN APPLYING FOR PARTY MEMBERSHIP. INTERESTING TO
SPECULATE WHETHER SURFACING OF COMPLAINTS BY INTELLIGENSIA
IN CONJUNCTION WITH ADMISSION OF FAILURE TO ATTRACT
WORKERS AND YOUTH PRESAGES MORE ACTIVE ROLD FOR
INTELLECTUALS WITHIN PARTY.

9. UNDAUNTED BY CRITICISMS, NEPSZABADSAG SAID IN BURST
OF ENTHUSIASM "THAT IT IS UNIVERSAL WISH OF PARTY
MEMBERS THAT, IN SOME WAY, EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH PARTY
MEMBERS SHOULD CONTINUE AND BE MADE SYSTEMATIC". ATTENTION
IS NOW FOCUSED ON CONTINUATION OF MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS,
ONE-THIRD OF WHICH ARE STILL TO BE HELD. AFTER CONCLUSION
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OF THESE MEETINGS THERE REMAINS TASK OF BASIC PARTY

ORGANIZATIONS TO ASSESS OPINIONS AND PROPOSALS ADVANCED
AND TO DRAW CONCLUSIONS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEMBERSHIP, COMMUNISTS, POLITICAL PARTIES, IDENTITY DOCUMENTS, PARTY EXPULSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BUDAPE02991
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760331-0736
From: BUDAPEST
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976085/aaaaadet.tel
Line Count: 226
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 APR 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <12 APR 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EXCHANGE OF COMMUNIST PARTY MEMBERSHIP CARDS
TAGS: PINT, HU
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006